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SP-879ANOTHER ONE FROM TEXAS

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An article with the above title appeared in the newspaper, Literaturnaya Gazeta, 12 June 1965. The following is a full translation of the text.

"On Sunday, 11 April 1965, US President Lyndon Johnson, who was spending a weekend at his Texas ranch, started out as usual by going to church. Then he visited the house where he spent his childhood to check on the work of irrigating a grass plot.

Nothing seemed to presage any sensational event. However, the correspondents assigned to the White House were somewhat puzzled. Lyndon Johnson was accompanied all through the day by a stocky, redhaired man, who was immediately recognized as Retired Vice-Admiral William Francis Raborn, Jr.

Several hours later the President suddenly announced that he was appointing William Raborn to replace John McCone who was retiring, as director of the US Central Intelligence Agency, or simply, as the American top spy, since according to law the CIA chief is at the same time chairman of the Council on Intelligence Matters [National Intelligence Board] and coordinates the activities of all intelligence organizations of the country.

This appointment was quickly confirmed by the Senate, and on 28 April Raborn already took the oath as new director of CIA, the "supersecret" organ of the US government, the uncontrolled expenditures of which are between one half billion and one billion dollars per year. (For the sake of comparison, it may be pointed out that during 4 years of World War II US Intelligence, i.e. the Office of Strategic Services, spent approximately 135 million dollars for its activities.)

The Admiral-Businessman

For Admiral Raborn, however, huge sums of money are nothing new. He acquired renown, not by sailing oceans or by combat operations, but as the man who headed the development and production of "Polaris" missiles, which are launched from submerged submarines. Even before this missile was launched for the first time, 3.5 billion dollars were spent on it (by this time, it has cost the US taxpayers more than 10 billion dollars).

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Be that as it may, but Raborn solved the task which had been given to him and the missile was finally launched. The US press has attributed this mainly to his "organizational ability." By the way, Raborn himself looks at the matter much more simply, saying: "I had all that was necessary, i.e., the power and the money."

With regard to the admiral's purely military career, his achievements cannot be called "outstanding" by any means. Rather, if one is superstitious (and many American sailors are superstitious), one might say he belongs to those people who bring bad luck. Raborn joined the sea-going navy only in 1944, when he became senior officer on the "Hancock" aircraft carrier. On 7 April 1945 this ship was seriously damaged and caught fire after an attack by Japanese kamikaze pilots. In April 1954 Raborn assumed command of the "Bennington" aircraft carrier, and on 26 May the catapult on this ship exploded during a training exercise.

It is not surprising that this former "average" student of the Annapolis Naval Academy preferred to work at headquarters on land. In September 1963, he retired from the post of deputy chief of staff for scientific research of the US Navy to become vice-president of the Aerojet General Corporation in California. Raborn had long been closely associated with this corporation, which specializes in the production of solid-fuel rocket engines, as he had been in contact with it since the time of the "Polaris" development. It may be assumed that the Aerojet General Corporation received a large amount of those billions of dollars which passed through Raborn's hands at that time.

Why did this typical representative of the "military-industrial complex", against the dangerous influence of which on US political life even former President Eisenhower had cautioned, appear once more in Washington?

According to an article in the well-informed journal, US News and World Report, published soon after Raborn's appointment, "Retired Vice-Admiral William Raborn was chosen by President Johnson as chief of the huge Central Intelligence Agency, because he is considered sufficiently capable and determined to establish firm control over this agency and keep the President informed of the details of its operation. As reported, the CIA has become so secret that even the White House is having difficulties in trying to find out what is really happening." We cannot agree with this evaluation in all details. However, it is well known that the dissatisfaction of the White House with some aspects of CIA activities is a matter of long standing. It is known, for example, that the ignominious failure of

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the Cuban invasion in April 1961, organized by the Central Intelligence Agency, infuriated then President Kennedy, who gave instructions to investigate the role of CIA in the whole matter.

As emphasized by the influential US observer Stewart Alsop, "after the catastrophe in the Bay of Pigs all leading officials of the Central Intelligence Agency, beginning with Dulles (Allen Dulles was CIA director at that time), were removed." The new CIA leadership, headed by John McCone, for a while restored its reputation of an octopus-spy in the eyes of President Kennedy and his entourage. However, apparently this did not last long. The secret and overt operations of this agency became, according to New York World Telegram and Sun, so "all-encompassing" and "uncontrolled" that they began to cause concern with many Americans in Washington.

All this would not have been so bad for CIA, if there had not been failures after Cuba in a number of other countries, such as Cambodia, Zanzibar, Panama, and others, which caused open criticism in the US press. This criticism became particularly severe in the fall of 1963, in connection with events in South Vietnam.

As reported by US correspondent Starnes from Saigon, "the Central Intelligence Agency twice categorically refused to obey the instructions of Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge. In one case, the CIA foiled the plans of action, which had been brought by Lodge from Washington, because it did not agree with them."

The conflict between Henry Lodge, who was US ambassador in South Vietnam at that time, and John Richardson, the head of a huge CIA apparatus, was aggravated to such an extent that Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara and Gen Maxwell Taylor, then chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, were sent to investigate the situation. An editorial in New York World Telegram and Sun predicted: "In one way or another, some heads will roll." This prediction came true. Richardson was recalled from South Vietnam. Once more, as it was after the Cuban adventure in 1961, the thunder clouds gathered over the agency of John McCone.

However, this time the lightning did not strike, for soon after that the shots fired in Dallas cut off the life of President Kennedy and relegated all interdepartmental squabbles to second place, at least for a while.

But Why Raborn?

All this, however, did not signify that Lyndon Johnson, whom the US press describes as an imperious man who does not like to be contradicted, was willing to reconcile himself to the "willfulness"

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of CIA. Therefore, the rumors which started in Washington at the end of last year concerning the forthcoming retirement of McCone caused no surprise. This retirement had been anticipated. The only question was who would replace him as director of CIA.

Many names were mentioned, but all of them were eliminated for some reason or other. A man whose name had never before been mentioned in the press as a possible candidate for the post became the new director of CIA.

In choosing Raborn, President Johnson was apparently guided by a number of considerations. First, Raborn, unlike McCone, had developed good relations with Congress and with the Pentagon, according to the US press. In pointing out that President Johnson needed "a CIA chief who was trusted by Congress", the newspaper New York Herald Tribune stated: "Although Congress is not in favor of having a military man at the head of CIA, the retired [admiral] Raborn is very popular on Capitol Hill."

Moreover, according to the US press, Raborn is "the favorite of Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara," i.e. the "strongest personality in the government." All this gave reason to hope that it may be possible to ease, even if not terminate, the acute inter-departmental struggle for influence on the President and on decisions of the National Security Council, and consequently, on the determination of US foreign policy, which struggle has been going on for years between CIA, the Pentagon, and the State Department.

The second consideration in favor of Raborn was the fact that he would be able to establish the same kind of order and use the same methods of administration in CIA, as those used by McNamara in the Department of Defense. These methods, according to a recent statement by the noted observer Jack Raymond, "permitted McNamara, to a greater extent than has been possible for any former Secretary of Defense, to exercise strict personal control over all the numerous military functions of the United States."

Finally, in appointing Raborn to the post of CIA director, the personal feelings of the President were by no means unimportant. According to a recent article in New York Post, "in October of last year, when so many retired generals and admirals were in favor of electing Goldwater, Admiral Raborn was among the very few who openly spoke out for Johnson." The fact that Raborn was born in Texas and was raised in the neighboring state of Oklahoma is also a considerable advantage in the eyes of the President. Only about a year ago Johnson, according to the New York Herald Tribune, complained in private about the "shortage" of Texans and other Southerners in the government apparatus.

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It may be mentioned that he has recently done a lot to correct this "shortage." In stressing the great changes in Washington after Lyndon Johnson's arrival in the White House, one of the recent issues of Look magazine even published a special article about the "Texanization" of the capital. The appointment of Retired Admiral Raborn to the post of CIA director is one more step in this direction.

What Next?

More than a month has passed since the change of leadership in the CIA. However, nothing much has changed in the activities of US intelligence. This can probably best be observed by the events in the Dominican Republic.

The US Marines began to land in this country to suppress the national movement on the same day that Raborn took the oath as director of CIA. According to New York Post, "for Vice-Admiral Raborn, the US military intervention in the Dominican Republic was the first risky step he took as director of CIA... From the very beginning, he stated with great determination that the revolt was led by Communists and that the emergence of "another Cuba" was inevitable. He gave the President a list of 55 Communists who took part in the revolt. It later turned out that there were quite a few exaggerations in this list."

The failure of US policy in the Dominican Republic is so obvious that even people in Washington began to talk about it openly. However, someone has to take the blame for the failure. According to New York Daily News, "the President's advisers are looking for scapegoats in order to blame them for the confusion in the Dominican Republic." And one of the first candidates for such a "scapegoat" may turn out to be the new boss of CIA.

Of course, this is not a matter that concerns him personally. The shift of leadership in this organization has, apparently, not brought the desired results in regard to a termination of inter-departmental squabbles in Washington. On the contrary, in the opinion of the CIA rivals, now is the most appropriate time for settling an old score with CIA.

The Central Intelligence Agency will, of course, not hesitate to react, and so the fight of the Washington spiders continues.

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So far it is hard to say how this squabble will end. In the final analysis, it is clear that it is not a matter of the personalities who head the CIA. It is a matter of the fallacy of the whole US foreign policy for which, of course, not only the CIA but all the top government departments of the United States bear the responsibility.